



How to Eat Like a Gentleman: Dietetics and Ethics in Early Modern England

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RIGHT LIVING

*An Anglo-American
Tradition of Self-Help
Medicine and Hygiene*

EDITED BY

Charles E. Rosenberg

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Charles E. Rosenberg, "Catechisms of Health: The Body in the Prebellum Classroom," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 69 (1995): 175–97.

30. George Cheyne was probably the most widely cited English language adviser in such matters. See his *The English Malady; or, a Treatise of Nervous Diseases of all Kinds, as Spleen, Vapours, Lowness of Spirits, Hypochondriacal, and Hysterical Distempers* . . . (London: G. Strahan and J. Leake, 1733) and idem, *The Natural Method of Cureing the Diseases of the Body, and the Disorders of the Mind Depending on the Body* . . . The 3d edition (London: George Strahan and J. & P. Knapton, 1742). For examples of American reprints of English texts in this psychosomatic and social critical tradition, see Thomas Trotter, *A View of the Nervous Temperament; being a Practical Inquiry into the Increasing Prevalence, Prevention, and Treatment of those Diseases Commonly called Nervous* . . . (Troy, N.Y.: Wright, Goodenow, & Stockwell, 1808); John Reid, *Essays on Hypochondriacal and other Nervous Affections* . . . (Philadelphia: M. Carey & Son, 1817). For an overview of such ideas, see Charles E. Rosenberg, "Body and Mind in Nineteenth-Century Medicine: Some Clinical Origins of the Neurosis Construct," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 63 (1989): 185–97.

31. The phrenological literature is enormous and reflects a widespread lay interest in managing and predicting psychological and emotional traits. See, for example, John D. Davies, *Phrenology: Fad and Science: A 19th Century American Crusade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955); David de Giustino, *Conquest of Mind: Phrenology and Victorian Social Thought* (London: Croom Helm, 1975); Roger Cooter, *The Cultural Meaning of Popular Science: Phrenology and the Organization of Consent in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); idem, *Phrenology in the British Isles: An Annotated, Historical Bibliography and Index* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1989). Mesmerism provided a parallel inspiration for popular attempts to understand and manage the mind. See, for example, Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

32. William Sweetser, *Mental Hygiene: An Examination of the Intellect and Passions, designed to illustrate their influence on health and duration of life* (New York: J. and H. G. Langley, 1843); Isaac Ray, *Mental Hygiene* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1863). General books on health and regimen ordinarily included sections on the passions—we would say emotions—and their role in the etiology of disease. In the second half of the nineteenth century, moreover, books and pamphlets devoted to the "nerves and nervous" became increasingly common in the English-speaking world.

33. For a useful recent introduction to the German literature, see David L. Cowen and Renate Wilson, "The Traffic in Medical Ideas: Popular Medical Texts as German Imports and American Imprints," *Caduceus* 13 (1997): 67–80. In the colonial and early national years, the printing of German health advice was largely an eastern Pennsylvania enterprise. In the second half of the nineteenth century, mainstream English language health guides—such as those by Gunn and E. B. Foote—were translated and published in such cities as Cincinnati, St. Louis, and New York. By the end of the nineteenth century, the once abundant Pennsylvania German health imprints had largely died out.

STEVEN SHAPIN

2

How to Eat Like a Gentleman

*Dietetics and Ethics in
Early Modern England*

A well-behaved stomach is a great part of liberty.

—Montaigne (quoting Seneca)

Consider two genres of books that were common in early modern England. One was the popular medical text. This sort of book was produced by medical practitioners and, quite often, by nonmedical men who for various reasons reckoned they had something worth saying on the subject. The general purpose of such works was to extend medical knowledge and to recommend courses of action to preserve health, cure disease, or prolong life. You could act as your own physician on many, if not all, occasions, and this genre told you how to do it, or at least reminded you of the value of what you might be presumed already to know. These books emphasized not so much diagnostics and therapeutics as dietetics—not just recommendations on what to eat and drink, but regimen and hygiene in their broadest aspects. This emphasis reflected the contemporary center of gravity in medical culture, and it also picked out a domain of action in which the maintenance of health was very much in readers' own hands, importantly taking for granted the economic ability of readers to exercise choice about their diet. Lots of these kinds of books were written from the mid-sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and even though we have little reliable knowledge of their circulation, ownership, and uses, we can be fairly sure that the average educated person was familiar with some of them.¹

Another genre of popular books was composed of practical ethical tracts, including so-called courtesy books.² These were written by gentlemen great and small (or by "gentlemen's gentlemen"—tutors, governors, and companions) for other gentlemen who might appreciate a reminder of what the social game was all about, wanted to be recognized as gentlemen, desired that standing for their children and wished to raise them accordingly, had cultural goods to sell to gentlemanly society, or, for a variety of reasons, wished to know how gentlemen did or should behave. English courtesy books instructed readers about the authentic basis of gentility, and although they generally acknowledged that birth and wealth counted for much, they overwhelmingly stressed (alone or in various combinations) the role of virtue, education, piety, and easy good manners as the proper entitlements to gentlemanly status. Humanism and Puritanism each had their proprietary views of what the English gentleman ought to be and what was wrong with what he then was. These books explained how to live a virtuous life; how to behave in a polite, prudent, and civil manner; how to raise sons; how to pass muster; and sometimes, if necessary in a period of mask and mobility, just how to pass. There were lots of these books around too, and they were often inventoried in the emerging gentleman's "library" of the seventeenth-century English country or town house.³ Samuel Pepys—a tailor's son, but a well-connected one, and very much on the rise, always curious about how people behaved in circles above his—was an avid consumer of such books.⁴ And John Aubrey's practical thoughts on the education of gentlemen's sons recommended the reading of the better courtesy books for instilling in the young what he called "mundane prudence."⁵

Manners and medicine do not seem, on the surface of things, to have much to do with each other. Books explaining how to behave like a gentleman might be presumed very different sorts of things than books explaining how to preserve health and live long. And, indeed, from all sorts of pertinent points of view, the two genres *are* distinct: frankly medical texts do not offer rules for when to "take the wall" and when to bear your head, and a courtesy book or essay in practical deportment is unlikely to contain instructions about whether boiled or roasted meats are more suitable for an atrabilious temperament. Yet there is an overlap in substance between the two genres, and it is a telling one: that which was considered dietetically good *for* you was also accounted *morally* good. The relationship between the medical and the moral was not merely metaphorical; it was constitutive. In doing what was good for you, you were doing what was good: materially constituting yourself as a virtuous and pru-

dent person, giving symbolic public displays of how virtuous and prudent persons behaved, encouraging such behavior in others, fulfilling the noblest aspect of your nature as a human being. The medical and the moral occupied the same terrain, figuratively in the case of cultural modes, literally in the mundane management of the body and its transactions with the world.

This cohabitation, and the consequent substantive overlap between medical culture and moral commentary, has been noted many times before, both for early modern England and more generally for premodern medicine. In the 1930s Ludwig Edelstein summarized the fundamental dictum of ancient dietetics: "He who would stay healthy must . . . know how to live rightly."⁶ Owsei Temkin described the assumption of Galenic medicine that "[a] healthy life is a moral obligation . . . Health . . . becomes a responsibility and disease a matter for possible moral reflection." He beautifully depicted what it meant in antiquity to say that the philosophic life of virtue depended upon the medical care of the self, and he recounted Galen's view that "[t]he disposition of the soul is corrupted by unwholesome habits in food and drink, and in exercise, in what we see and hear, and in all the arts."⁷ Temkin observed: "The coupling of right diet and virtue was an essential part of Galenic philosophy. Proper regimen balanced the temperament of the body and its parts, and with them the psychic functions. Correct and incorrect diet could determine health and disease, and because it was under human control, the choice of diet gave a moral dimension to health and sickness."⁸ And on this subject Michel Foucault's account of the moral nature of ancient dietetics is little more than an expansion of insights secured by such scholars as Edelstein, Temkin, Sigerist, and a pioneering generation of students of ancient medicine.⁹ More recently, Keith Thomas has briefly but perceptively written about the constitutive relationship between medicine and morality in early modern English popular medical texts, noting that "their advice coincided closely with the conventional morality of the day. Indeed, the precepts they offered were as much ethical as medical."¹⁰ That link has also been thoroughly treated by historians dealing with the popular medical literature of later periods and in non-English settings.¹¹

My aims here are modest. I want to add more depth and detail to our current understandings of the early modern English connections between dietetics and morality, but, more importantly, I want to do this by approaching that relationship from a different direction than has been customary. Supposing that you were a moral philosopher, or a historian of practical ethics, what picture of medicine would you get if you looked at historical sources central to

your discipline? What does dietetic advice look like when one encounters it not in explicitly medical tracts but in the literature of practical ethics written by and for gentlemen, instructing them how to live a virtuous, prudent, and effective life? What are the social-historical circumstances that mold the dietetic counsel one finds there? What broad agreements and what contests were there about the shape and content of this advice during the early modern period? What does the resulting picture show about the relationship between the layperson and the professional, between common sense and expertise? And, finally, what can this different angle of attack suggest about changing relations between health and virtue in the early modern and in the late modern constitutions?

Nothing to Excess: Dietary Moderation and Gentlemanly Health

No English practical ethical text of which I am aware omitted passages of medical advice, and dietetics made up by far the biggest portion of that medical advice. The dietetic counsel one finds in this literature is remarkably stable over time and setting; it reeks of prudence and robust common sense; it is skeptical of extremes, innovations, one-size-fits-all courses of action, and claims to external special expertise; but its very banality and cultural robustness is what makes it so deeply interesting.

In 1531 Thomas Elyot's *The Governor* commended temperance in all things and sobriety in diet: surfeit was bad for you, engendering "painful diseases and sicknesses."¹² Thomas Gainsford's *Rich Cabinet* passed on the proverbial form: "Temperance in diet and exercise, will make a man say; a figge, for *Gallen & Paracelsus*." That is to say, a temperate diet—like the apple—keeps the doctor away.¹³ When King James VI of Scotland (later James I of England) wrote to instruct his infant son and heir, Henry, how to live like a prince, he too warned against "using excesse of meate and drinke" and told him above all to "beware of drunkennesse."¹⁴ James Cleland's *The Instruction of a Young Noble-man* (1612) followed the king's counsel closely: "[I]t is the preservation of health not to be filled with meate; & when a man eateth more meat then his stomacke is able to digest he becommeth sicke."¹⁵ In the 1630s Henry Peacham's *Complete Gentleman*—also much influenced by royal views—said the same: the gentleman was to "be moderate" in regard of his health, "which is impaired by nothing more than excess in eating and drinking (let me also add tobacco-taking).

Many dishes breed many diseases, dulleth the mind and understanding, and not only shorten but take away life."¹⁶ Gilbert Burnet's *Thoughts on Education* even pointed to proto-eugenic reasons for shunning "all wasting intemperance, and excesse": "[S]ince the minds of children are molded into the temper of that case and body wherein they are thrust, and the healthfulness and strength of their bodies is suitable to the source and fountain from whence they spring, it clearly appears that persons wasted by drunkenness or venery must procreate unhealthful, crazy, and often mean-spirited children."¹⁷

Even strongly "Puritan" courtesy texts criticized contemporary dietary excess for practical medical reasons. Restoration gallants made debauchery their profession, but they would surely pay for their pleasure: "The *Table* is the *Altar* where they *sacrifice* their *Healths* to their *Appetittes*; and *Temperance* to *Luxury*." Gentlemanly infatuation with exotic and expensive foods was proverbial: "What's farre fetch't and deare bought is meat for Gentlemen."¹⁸ Jean Gailhard's *Compleat Gentleman* (1678) cautioned parents to accustom their children early to "sobriety and temperance in their diet." They should be bred to approach the table "not so much to please their palate, as to nourish their body . . . for exuberancy of food causes surfeits, which do endanger their life . . . [P]lain food is more nourishing, and less hurtful, than that which is accounted more exquisite; because the palate is pleased with it, though it be otherwise with the stomach."¹⁹ And when John Locke, writing more as a household governor than as a philosopher, or even as an Oxford physician, composed his 1693 tract on the education of gentlemen's sons, he too advocated a "plain and simple diet." Little meat, much bread, few spices, small beer only: drunkenness, gluttony, and gormandizing to be avoided at all costs. The English ate far too much meat, and to this intemperate habit Locke imputed "a great Part" of the "Diseases in England."²⁰ The third earl of Shaftesbury, whose early education was entrusted to Locke, later commended temperance and a moderate diet in his *Inquiry Concerning Virtue*.²¹ And so said virtually all the English courtesy and practical ethical writers from the mid-sixteenth to the early eighteenth century.

English moralists' commendation of dietary moderation had a national bite to it. Continental as well as local voices of temperance reckoned that the English were tucking into far too much beef and swilling down far too much ale and that this was bad for their health. English writers of practical ethical texts, one might think, had a vested interest in criticizing contemporary dietary excess, and in judging that things were much worse than they had been in the English past. Yet these dietary jeremiads were often plausibly specific in their

condemnations of *new* habits of gentlemanly intemperance, and present-day historians broadly agree with them about the facts of the matter. Anna Bryson, for example, describes the English court dinner "as a competitive exercise in conspicuous consumption"; Lawrence Stone reckons that the massive consumption of flesh—reaching mountainous proportions at the court of James I—was a possible cause of a gentlemanly plague of bladder and kidney stone; and Roy Porter and George Rousseau document eighteenth-century appreciations of a causal link between an epidemic of fashionable gout and increased English intake of meat and strong drink.²² It was common—in England but also on the Continent—to blame new fashions in excess on the influence of foreigners. Peacham said that the English once had a national reputation for sobriety but that the imitation of Dutch and German drinking habits had ruined all that. Englishmen were now, Peacham judged, unhealthier, weaker, and even shorter than the victors of Agincourt, and this was attributed to overeating and overdrinking.²³ Seventeenth-century ethical writers identified this as an age of "luxury": not just dietary excess, but "delicacy," exoticism, variety, and complexity were often assigned to the influence of effete, debauched, and papist France and Italy.²⁴ And when these authors pointed to the early Stuart and Restoration court as the center of such unwholesome practices, the criticism of dietary sophistication and excess became an element in one of the major *political* conflicts of the seventeenth century: Court versus Country ideologies.

The English defenders of Good Olde Roast Beef, and lots of it, were not, of course, bereft of a response, insisting that such fare was physiologically appropriate to their damp and chilly climate; that it bred stout, hot-blooded heroes; that such straightforward and lavishly portioned victuals were suited to honest English natures; and, at a level less often surfacing in print, that dietary abundance was a mark of gentlemanly hospitality, generosity, and gusto.²⁵ "Gluttony was honourable," Roy Porter wrote of eighteenth-century English gentlemanly society: "[H]andsome eating was a token of success, and hospitality admired. Englishmen tucked in and took pride in their boards and bellies."²⁶ That great eighteenth-century Tory and gourmand, Samuel Johnson, showed just what the dietary moralists were up against when he famously announced, "He who does not mind his belly will hardly mind any thing else." Dr. Johnson at table was not a pretty sight: "[W]hile in the act of eating, the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible. To those whose sensations were delicate, this could not but be disgusting."²⁷

Preaching and practice in ethical matters commonly diverge. So the first

Stuart king—whose court was in fact renowned for its culinary extravagance—formally commended a plain and simple diet. Nor was there anything very novel about the terms in which the English ethical writers criticized intemperance: dietary surfeit, as well as excessive variety and elaboration, had been widely identified as unhealthy and unwholesome since antiquity, and ancient medics and moralists pervasively accounted *theirs* an age of unhealthy excess.²⁸ As a general rule, the Golden Age of moderation tends always to lie in the past. Moreover, while English condemnations of dietary excess were shaped by local conditions, texts much read by the English that were written by foreigners and that primarily addressed foreign settings added their support. Almost no book writer in any early modern cultural context said that frequent gorging or boozing was good for the body. Erasmus's Christian Prince was to flee from "excessive drinking and eating."²⁹ Castiglione blandly said that it was "well known" that the ideal courtier "ought not to profess to be a great eater or drinker."³⁰ And the conferees of Stefano Guazzo's *Civile Conversation* "all agree[d] in blaming and condemning of them, who never cease to fill their bellies up to the throate, and whose love and lyfe consisteth in spending their time in eating and drinkeing, and in riotous and excessive gluttonie."³¹ Even the cynical duc de La Rochefoucauld pointed to the prudence of dietary moderation: "[W]e would like to eat more but fear we shall be sick."³²

When educated Englishmen read the ancients—whether in Latin, in Greek, or in English translation—they saw the continuity of the counsel of moderation. If they conceded ancient authority—and, despite the so-called moderns of the Scientific Revolution, they almost all did—then they saw in that great continuity further warrants for dietetic wisdom. Educated Englishmen could, and did, get their counsel of dietary moderation from ancient ethical and political tracts as well as from the medical writings of Hippocrates, Galen, Celsus, Pliny, and Orabasius. They could find temperance recommended in the moral writings of Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Plutarch, and Seneca, and, indeed, many early modern ethical tracts were little more than palimpsests of such ancient sources.³³ Absolutely everywhere that bookish counsel was offered to early modern gentlemen, the Road to Wellville was signed by the Golden Mean.

The Dietetics of Virtue: Moderation and Mastery

Three sorts of Good Things happened if you observed the dietary Golden Mean. First, you preserved your health and obtained all the desiderata that de-

pended upon health; second, you displayed your wisdom and virtue and acquired a valuable public reputation; third, you created the material conditions in your own body for enhanced virtue and wisdom. The first Good Thing is possibly still familiar to early twenty-first-century readers even if its grandmotherly common sense sets it against both the particularity and physiological detail of current voices of medical expertise and the rampant food-faddism of the culture that often pretends to owe its authority to medical expertise.

But the other two Good Things are rather less familiar to late moderns and deserve explication. Dietary moderation was a display of wisdom and prudence for several reasons. If you observed moderation, you also *showed* that you cared for your health. For a private person this was personal prudence—even when glossed by a religious idiom that made the human body God's temple—but for a public person, other matters were at stake.³⁴ Gentlemanly, and especially courtly, eating and drinking were overwhelmingly public acts, and they were public acts saturated with meaning. You tended to be observed as you ate and drank—at court, in the household, or in public eating and drinking places; communal eating and drinking constituted social order, displayed social order, and sent finely tuned social messages back and forth among the diners and drinkers. The “pledging of healths” followed strict rules of precedence and carried messages of desired changes in precedence. The offering of choice hunks of meat, the manner and order in which these were offered, and the conditions under which one was obliged to accept, or allowed to decline, offered morsels, were acts rich in hierarchical significance.³⁵ And, as we now understand through the work of Norbert Elias and his followers, the “civilizing process” of bodily control that is supposed to have done so much to configure the modern social agent was particularly visible on those occasions when gentlemen and aristocrats met to eat and drink together.³⁶ James I underlined for his son the political importance of resisting any temptation to eat privately: “Therefore, as Kinges use oft to eate publicklye, it is meet and honorable that ye also do so, as wel to eschew the opinion that yee love not to haunt companie, which is one of the markes of a Tyrant, as likewaies, that your delighte to eate privatlye, be not thought to be for private satisfying of your gluttonie, which ye would be ashamed should be publicklye seene.”³⁷ “A good behaviour at Table,” Gailhard wrote, “is a strong proof of a good Education.” If you want to be treated like a gentleman, don't eat like a pig.³⁸

King James's *Basilicon Doron* showed acute sensitivity to the obligation towards temperance that bore specially upon a prince. People inferred a king's

true nature from observing his conduct at table. Accordingly, James advised his son to let his table behavior make a powerful display of self-control: “One of the publikest indifferent actiones of a King, & that manyest (especiallie strangers) wil narrowly take heed to, is, his manner of refection at his Table and his behaviour thereat.” Keep your dishes simple, eat of them with restraint, and never allow yourself to succumb to gluttony or drunkenness, “whiche is a beastly vice, namelie in a King.”³⁹ (And if King James himself had not gone to The Globe to see Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, many of those who read *Basilicon Doron* had vividly in mind Prince Hal's youthful revels with the gluttonous John Falstaff and his cool rejection of his fat friend on assuming the throne: “Make more thy grace and less thy body hence.”) These were all practical matters: on the one hand, a prince (or, indeed, any other public person) who showed that he cared little for his health also showed that he cared little for those people and public enterprises that depended upon him and his capacity for reliable, rational, and effective action. That is why the French physician Laurent Joubert said that princes had a special obligation to their health and to the dietary moderation that would secure health. First, the prince “must serve as a true model for his subjects and deputies and must be of a great perfection, more divine than human in sobriety [and] countenance.” Whatever the prince does, his subjects will emulate. Second, the prince has a lot to do and may be called to decisive action at any moment. For practical reasons he cannot allow himself to be ill or incapacitated by surfeit of food or drink. Third, the prince must execute policy over extended periods of time. A long and healthy life is the material condition for effective policy, for securing succession, and for ensuring the safety and stability of the state.⁴⁰

Such injunctions towards dietary moderation could be, and often were, conveyed in a secular medical idiom: eat moderately and you will live a long and healthy life. Or they might be cast in ripely rhetorical economic terms: Lord Burghley counseled his son towards a “plentiful” hospitality, but one kept well within “the measure of thine owne estate,” for, he said, he had never encountered “any man growne poore by keeping an orderly Table”; and Josiah Dare condemned those “Epicures and Belly Gods [who] gulch down their Estates by gulps, till in the end they come to be glad of a dry Crust . . . [T]he Purses of such Prodigals may be said to be poor by their great goings on, while their Bellies may be said to be rich by their great comings in.”⁴¹ But the practical ethical literature more often spoke of temperance in frankly moral and religious language. And here it was said that the overwhelming fault of dietary excess

was that it gave proof that the appetitive and bestial had gained sway over the rational, spiritual, and, therefore, uniquely human part of one's nature. That sensibility was utterly stable from the ancient Greek moralists to the seventeenth-century English ethical writers. Pagan or Christian, High or Low Church—it made little difference. Human beings were Great Amphibians: hybrid creations, partly animal and partly divine, and it was understood across a broad sweep of European culture that the self was a field of contest between rational will and appetitive desire. Accordingly, he who succumbed to excess—in food, drink, venery, or emotion—displayed a failure of rational control. The glutton or drunkard was more beast than human being. Indeed, he was worse than the beasts, “for they doe never exceed the measure prescribed by nature, but man will not be measured by the rule of his owne reason.”⁴² And the same hierarchy of control also followed the contours of social rank and order: the gentleman showed his entitlements through control of the appetites, while the absence of authentic gentility was displayed by the absence of restraint.⁴³ Dietary excess, a French ethical writer noted, “is the vice of brutish men,” and Lord Burghley said that he had “never heard any commendations ascribed to a drunkard more then the well bearing of his drinke, which is a commendation fitter for a brewer's horse or a drayman, then for either a Gentleman or Servingman.”⁴⁴ Authentic “generosity”—that is, in early modern usage, the virtuous essence of gentility—“teacheth men to be temperate in feeding, sober in drinking.”⁴⁵

Almost all practical ethical texts said the same sort of thing. *The Courtier* made the secular observation that temperance “brings under the sway of reason that which is perverse in our passions.”⁴⁶ Elyot followed Plotinus's commendation of temperance as that which “keep[s] desire under the yoke of reason” and which permits us “to covet nothing which may be repented.”⁴⁷ The Puritanical *Gentile Sinner* gave the same advice in a religious idiom: “The Gentleman is too much a man to be without all passion, but he is not so much a beast as to be governed by it.” Temperance gives him “*Empire over himselfe*, where he gives *Law* to his *Affections*, and *limits* the extravagances of *Appetite*, and the insatiable *cravings* of *sensuality*.”⁴⁸ Sir Walter Raleigh's advice to his son quantified the measure of drink along a scale leading from well-being and virtue to disease and vice: “[T]he first draught serveth for health, the second for pleasure, the third for shame, the fourth for madness.”⁴⁹ Richard Lingard's avuncular counsel to a new graduate commended dietary moderation: It “discover[s] you to be your *own Master*; for he is a miserable Slave that is under the Tyranny of his Passions: and that Fountain teeming pair, *Lust* and *Rage* must

especially be subdued.”⁵⁰ William de Britaine's prudential guide to how to get on in Restoration society traced the causal link between political control and the display of self-control: “He who commands himself, commands the World too; and the more Authority you have over others, the more command you must have over your self.”⁵¹ And Locke's practical educational tract said “that the Principle of all Virtue and Excellency lies in a Power of denying our selves the Satisfaction of our own Desires, where Reason does not authorize them.” Virtue could be acquired by practice, so dietary temperance should be practiced early.⁵²

The practical ethical literature was therefore almost unanimous in its commendation of dietary moderation as a *mark* of virtue. More fundamentally, however, temperance, or deliberate moderation, was considered a virtue in itself: so said the ancients, and so said early modern ethical writers. Castiglione observed that “many other virtues are born of temperance, for when a mind is attuned to this harmony, then through the reason it easily receives true fortitude, that makes it intrepid and safe from every danger, and almost puts it above human passions.”⁵³ Elyot wrote that the other virtues followed temperance, “as a sad and discreet matron and reverent governess,” preventing excess in all other ways of being.⁵⁴ The royal herald Lodowick Bryskett noted that temperance is “the rule and measure of Vertue, upon which dependeth mans felicitie,” and cited Platonic authority for the view that temperance is “the guardien or safe keeper of all human vertues.”⁵⁵ Thomas Gainsford wrote that temperance is “the protectrix of all other vertues,” and Richard Brathwait agreed that “no vertue can subsist without Moderation,” the foundation and root of all other virtues.⁵⁶ King James gave royal warrant to the ancient hierarchy that made temperance the “Queene of all the reste” of the virtues: without self-command one could not realize any virtuous end. If virtue consisted of the Golden Mean, then temperance was literally the master virtue.⁵⁷

The six Galenic “nonnaturals” were those forms of behavior presumed to be under volitional control whose rational management constituted the practice of traditional medical dietetics. The usual list of nonnaturals current in the early modern period included one's exposure to ambient air (the sort of place you decided to put your dwelling or spend your time), diet (in the strict sense of meat and drink), sleeping and waking, exercise and rest, retentions and evacuations (including sexual release), and the passions of the mind.⁵⁸ There is no more concrete sign of the common terrain occupied by practical ethics and practical dietetics in early modern England than the fact that several ethical

texts explicitly structured their counsel through a list of the nonnaturals, while others did so implicitly or diffusely. Rationally managed moderation of the nonnaturals just was virtuous and prudent, and no special indication was, or needed to be, given that consideration had here moved from moral onto medical terrain. That is because no such cultural shift had in fact occurred.

So, for example, Peacham's practical observations on contemporary English mores listed those things upon which both health and the ability to do civic good principally depended, "which are air, eating, drinking, sleep and waking, moving and exercise, and passions of the mind: that we may live to serve God, to do our king and country service, to be a comfort to our friends and helpful to our children and others that depend on us, let us follow sobriety and temperance, and have, as Tully saith, a diligent care of our health, which we shall be sure to do if we will observe and keep that one short, but true, rule of Hippocrates: 'All things moderately and in measure.'"⁵⁹ And Locke's influential educational text started out with a series of counsels that rigorously followed the traditional list of nonnaturals.⁶⁰ Note especially that the control of the passions—or, as we would say, the emotions—counts clearly as a key item in ethical discourse. Moralists have always counseled the control of anger and of avarice, and so they did in early modern England. Yet the place of the passions in the list of Galenic nonnaturals also establishes their place at the very center of medical dietetics, regimen, and hygiene.⁶¹ Looked at from the point of view of explicitly ethical writers, temperance in the nonnaturals seemed the soundest moral advice, while explicitly medical writers were similarly struck by the coincidence between what was good for you and what was good. In 1724 George Cheyne's *Essay of Health and Long Life* announced, "The infinitely wise Author of Nature has so contrived *Things*, that the most remarkable *Rules* of preserving *Life* and *Health* are *moral Duties* commanded us, so true it is, that *Godliness has the Promises of this Life, as well as that to come.*"⁶²

Temperance is a virtue; following the dictates of temperance leads you to the Golden Mean in the observation of all other virtues; and, finally, dietary temperance creates the moral-physical conditions for virtuous thinking and acting. Virtue is circular. The circle is closed by widely shared notions—again, continuous with antiquity—about how diet influences the operation of the mind. Francis Bacon wrote, "It is certain . . . that the brain is as it were under the protection of the stomach, and therefore the things which comfort and fortify the stomach by consent assist the brain, and may be transferred to this place."⁶³ Other writers placed greater emphasis on the potential of dietary ex-

cess to corrupt the mind. *Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus* was the old adage, common in both medical and civic circles.⁶⁴ Excess in food and drink, especially of gross food and strong drink, fed both sexual desire and anger. That is why practical ethical writers could say, "Gluttonie and Drunkennes [are] the mother of al vices." The passions could not be effectively controlled, nor could the mind reason clearly, when the fires of desire and rage were stoked by dietary excess. "What operation can a minde make," Cleland asked, "when it is darkened with the thicke vapours of the braine? Who can thinke that a faire Lute filled ful with earth is able to make a sweet Harmonie? . . . [N]o more is the minde able to exercise anie good function, when the stomacke is stuffed with victuals. How ought Noble men then, whose mindes are ordained to shine before others in al vertuous and laudable actions, stop the abuse of abhominable *Epicurisme*?"⁶⁵ Dietary excess was bad for your body, but the gross blood and vapors bred by excess also "dulleth the mind and understanding."⁶⁶ By contrast, Charron said of temperance, "Neither is it serviceable to the bodie onely, but to the minde too, which thereby is kept pure, capable of wisdom and good counsell."⁶⁷ But when the mind was clouded by dietary excess, then the rational ability to control excess was compromised. The virtuous mind/body circle induced by temperance then became truly vicious. By the 1730s the fashionable physician George Cheyne, building on Hippocratic and Galenic dietetic ideas, had developed an elaborate and systematic theory of the dietary causation of melancholy—"the English malady"—a major contribution to which was excess and to which a sovereign remedy was a severe and formulaic "lowering diet."⁶⁸

What the Mean Meant: Specifying Dietary Moderation

Like all the Aristotelian virtues, dietary moderation was poised between two vicious extremes. The practical ethical literature, however, overwhelmingly concentrated on the vices of excess, commending temperance in opposition to gluttony, drunkenness, delicacy, and overelaboration. The authors of such tracts were appearing in the person of the moralist, and the audiences they had in view were those gentlemen and aristocrats who had the resources to indulge themselves and who, in moralists' opinion, were in fact now indulging themselves on a spectacular scale. Nevertheless, there was also a minor theme in early modern ethical writing that picked out the vices attending the ascetic extreme.

Dietary asceticism was well known in early modern society; those who endorsed and embraced it spoke from some of that society's most authoritative platforms; and its cultural significance was widely understood within gentlemanly circles. Even so, dietary asceticism was very rarely advocated by ethical writers addressing themselves to civic actors, and, indeed, the practical dangers and social inconveniences of asceticism were sometimes spelled out. Asceticism was seen as strongly linked to the character of spiritual intellectuals and to patterns of disengagement and private contemplation that shaped their lives. Such asceticism and disengagement might be accorded high cultural value in civic society, but moralists generally warned gentlemen to avoid these practices. They were just not suited to the lives led by civic actors. They offended against gentlemanly obligations to generosity; they counted as a disagreeable display of self-indulgence and prissiness; they blocked the quotidian rhythms of gentlemanly social interaction; and, as I shall soon note, they might constitute both practical and social risks to the adaptability and mobility central to gentlemanly life.

If practical ethical writers would not have their readers be gluttons and drunkards, neither did they approve asceticism.⁶⁹ Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* excoriated excess—ancient and modern—at length but more briefly noted the mischief wrought on their bodies and minds by those going to the other extreme: “too ceremonious and strict diet, being over precise, Cockney-like, curious in their observation of meats . . . just so many ounces at dinner . . . a diet-drink in the morning, cock-broth . . . [T]o sounder bodies this is too nice and most absurd.” This was uncivil and unsound, but there were other dangers: monks and anchorites were well known to have driven themselves mad “through immoderate fasting.”⁷⁰ Henry Peacham was one of several practical ethical writers who warned against going too far in the avoidance of dietary excess: “Neither desire I you should be so abstemious as not to remember a friend with a hearty draught, since wine was created to make the heart merry, for ‘what is the life of man if it want wine?’ Moderately taken, it preserveth health, comforteth and disperseth the natural heat over all the whole body, allays cholerick humors, expelling the same with the sweat, etc., tempereth melancholy, and, as one saith, hath in itself a drawing virtue to procure friendship.”⁷¹

To eat and drink like a gentleman was, then, to eat and drink both temperately and reasonably. So said virtually all the practical ethical writers of the period. The commendation of routine intemperance by any author pretending to

prescribe a virtuous and prudent life is almost inconceivable. The Golden Mean was so thoroughly institutionalized in both ethical and medical canons that its denial would violate good sense and decency. The sensibility of the carnivalesque did indeed reject temperance, as did exercises of cultural subversion or inversion, but these rejections underlined just how central temperance was to early modern tradition, to orthodoxy, and to common sense.⁷² Moderation was therefore a great cultural prize, and because it was such a prize, there were contests for giving its counsel specific content and for defining what moderation meant.

That content and meaning could and did vary in early modern England, yet it is noteworthy how variation, and even conflict, occurred while holding stable much or even all of the prescriptive form that counseled dietary moderation and that identified moderation as both morally good and medically good for you. The views of Francis Bacon are particularly pertinent in this connection. Bacon wrote a lot about medicine. Like several other “modern” natural philosophers of the Scientific Revolution, he considered that the medical profession was in a sorry state and that physicians’ relative inability to prevent disease, to cure disease, and to extend human life were largely owing to deficiencies in physiological knowledge. “Medicine,” he judged, “is a science which hath been . . . more professed than laboured, and yet more laboured than advanced.”⁷³

Bacon was specially unimpressed with the state of medical dietetics. Traditional advocacy of the dietary Golden Mean had become, to a degree, trite and unreflective, and it had never been informed by an adequate stock of valid empirical knowledge. Adherence to the Mean was still to count as prudence, but one must properly understand where the Mean was located and what were the nature and consequences of extremes. So Bacon—in both his essay “Of Regiment of Health” and his much longer tract on “Life and Death”—appropriated Celsus as authority for a respecification of dietary moderation. In the essay, Bacon wrote, “*Celsus* could never have spoken it as a *Physician*, had he not been a *Wise Man* withall; when he giveth it, for one of the great precepts of Health and Lasting; That a Man doe vary, and enterchange Contraries; But with an Inclination to the more benigne Extreme: Use Fasting and full Eating, but rather full Eating; Watching and Sleep, but rather Sleep, Sitting, and Exercise, but rather Exercise; and the like.”⁷⁴ And in his philosophical work on longevity and health, Bacon similarly said, “[W]here extremes are prejudicial, the mean is the best; but where extremes are beneficial, the mean is mostly

worthless . . . [W]e should not neglect the advice of Celsus, a wise as well as a learned physician, who advises variety and change of diet, but with an inclination to the liberal side; namely that a man should at one time accustom himself to watching, at another to sleep, but oftener to sleep; sometimes fast and sometimes feast, but oftener feast; sometimes strenuously exert, sometimes relax the faculties of his mind, but oftener the latter."⁷⁵ Bacon was here disputing that dietary extremes *were* necessarily vicious and damaging. Often, if not always, moving towards one extreme might be in itself more beneficial than moving towards the other—eating a lot was better than fasting, sleeping a lot was better than staying awake—and, when this was manifestly the case, then the point of prudence was shifted towards—though not reaching—the beneficial extreme. Bacon practiced what he preached: his seventeenth-century biographer noted that Bacon followed “rather a plentiful and liberal diet, as his stomach would bear it, than a restrained.”⁷⁶ And his nineteenth-century editors observed: “He could make nothing of a great dinner. He said, ‘if he were to sup for a wager he would dine with a Lord Mayor.’”⁷⁷ Bacon not only wrote but ate like a Lord Chancellor.

It was, Bacon recognized, fashionable to associate dietary abstinence with longevity, and perhaps there was indeed a causal relationship of this sort: “It seems to be approved by experience that a spare and almost Pythagorean diet, such as is prescribed by the stricter order of monastic life, or the institutions of hermits . . . produces longevity.” But there was no absolute certainty in the matter—later in the same tract Bacon wrote that “[f]requent fasting is bad for longevity”—nor was it evident that longevity was the only relevant consideration. Bacon cited evidence that, among those “as live freely and in the common way”—that is to say, civic actors—“the greatest gluttons, and those most devoted to good living, are often found the most long-lived.” Nor was he aware of any solid evidence that rigorous observance of the so-called middle diet contributed to longevity, even though it *might* be a prudent way to health. If you really want to live according to the exact rule of moderation, then you are going to have to do it with very great care, more care than the public actor may wish to, or may be able to, devote to such things. More care, indeed, than it might be worth.⁷⁸

Celsus did indeed point out the medical benefits of a varied diet and way of life, but Bacon went his ancient authority one better. The Mean might be defined in terms of its momentary location between dietary extremes. In this case, the counsel of moderation would be: Drink two glasses of wine a day;

never drink ten a day; and there's no good in having any wine-free days. Alternatively, the Mean might be redefined by what we would now call a statistical distribution over time of daily behaviors. And in this case, the voice of temperance would say: Drink ten glasses of wine in a day if you wish, but don't make a habit of it. Bacon, it appears, meant to respecify dietary moderation along the latter lines. He concluded his discussion of how the body operated on aliment by offering advice at odds with dominant medical and moral counsel: “With regard to the quantity of meat and drink, it occurs to me that a little excess is sometimes good for the irrigation of the body; whence immoderate fasting and deep potations are not to be entirely forbidden.”⁷⁹

Here Bacon was articulating, and giving philosophical and gentlemanly cachet to, a dietary sensibility that evidently ran deep in lay culture, however much it was disapproved by physicians, priests, and most moralizing authors. The vomiting and purging induced by dietary excess was considered to cleanse the system, to get rid of accumulated crud and noxious substances, and to give the body a healthy catharsis. As was common in early modern gentlemanly society, Bacon himself often “took physick” for these purposes, but apparently only his personal recipe for a maceration of rhubarb in a little white wine and beer to “carry away the grosser humours of the body.” Describing himself as “ever puddering in physick,” Bacon acted largely as his own physician and dosed himself in moderation, with very great attention to detail.⁸⁰ Montaigne, whose essays Bacon much admired, similarly wove together medicine and manners in commending the occasional binge: “He will even plunge often into excess, if he will take my advice; otherwise the slightest dissipation will ruin him, and he will become awkward and disagreeable company.”⁸¹ Sir Thomas Browne's later compilation of commonly received errors recorded the view “[t]hat 'tis good to be drunk once a moneth, is a common flattery of sensuality, supporting it self upon physick, and the healthfull effects of inebriation.”⁸² Laurent Joubert deplored the popular saying “There are more old drunkards than there are old physicians,” while also identifying ancient authority—Celsus again—for the advice that one should sometimes eat to surfeit.⁸³ And John Aubrey's life of Thomas Hobbes recorded the philosopher as saying “that he did beleieve he had been in excesse in his life, a hundred times; which, considering his great age, did not amount to above once a yeare. When he did drinke, he would drinke to excesse to have the benefitt of Vomiting, which he did easily . . . but he never was, nor could not endure to be, habitually a good fellow, i.e. to drinke every day wine with company, which, though not to drunkenness, spoiles the

Braine."⁸⁴ In the eighteenth century such lay approval of occasional excess still troubled physicians, who did not appreciate Bacon giving it further credibility. James MacKenzie's *History of Health* (1760) acknowledged that it was popularly, but falsely, attributed to Hippocrates that "getting drunk once or twice every month [w]as conducive to health."⁸⁵ In any case, such counsel was pervasive. It represents some of the sentiments that physicians were up against when they commended a rigorous observance of dietary moderation.

"To Live Physically is to Live Miserably": The Dietary Vicissitudes of the Active Life

Physicians were piqued by the respecification of moderation as occasional excess, but gentlemanly society nevertheless had excellent reasons for choosing to ignore the physicians. Bacon's essay on regimen aphoristically summed up the relevant consideration: "In *Sickness*, respect *Health* principally; And in *Health*, *Action*."⁸⁶ The early modern public actor—the gentleman, the courtier, the politician, the diplomat, the merchant, the soldier—came down firmly on the action side in the ancient debate between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*. In natural philosophy, Bacon's modernizing reforms were meant to reshape intellectual inquiry to fit the exigencies of political and economic action.⁸⁷ So, in medicine, Bacon reckoned that the legitimate test of medical practice was its ability to enhance the capacity for action. And in no case should medical counsel withdraw otherwise healthy men from the active sphere. If occasional feasting and boozing were central to the public life—and in early modern England they spectacularly were—then it could not possibly be a point of prudence or of morality to embrace medical counsel that removed public actors from those scenes in which public action occurred and in which social solidarity was made and subverted. The sort of self-indulgent discipline that was acceptable for sequestered scholars, monks, or retired gentlemen was not proper or permissible for the civic actor. La Rochefoucauld declared, "To keep well by too strict a regimen is a tedious disease in itself."⁸⁸ And when the proverbial voice similarly said that "[t]o live physically"—that is, according to the commands of physick—"was to live miserably," two things were meant: first, that it was not pleasant for your body; second, that it was a socially unacceptable way of living. The rigorous dietetics of moderation had to be tempered by other important ethical concerns, and, indeed, the meaning of moderation might even be respecified so as to align the notion of temperance with

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these other concerns. That is why Bacon's early biographer, giving the details of the Lord Chancellor's program of self-medication, felt obliged to insist that "he did indeed live physically, but not miserably."⁸⁹

If you were actually ill, then, of course, you should summon your physician and accept his best advice. It was important to your part in the active life that you got better as quickly as you could. But if you were not actually ill, there was no reason to submit yourself to the severely ordered regimens prescribed by medical counsels of moderation. This principle was widely known among early modern medical and moral writers as the Rule of Celsus. In the original, the rule went like this: "A man in health, who is both vigorous and his own master, should be under no obligatory rules, and have no need, either for a medical attendant, or for a rubber and anointer. His kind of life should afford him variety."⁹⁰ The Rule of Celsus—the rule of no rule—had all the appeal of common sense; its dictates appeared both to accommodate prudential considerations and to fit with much of what counted as reliable physiological knowledge. Over a period of time—both lay and medical voices said—your body got accustomed to your usual diet and to the usual rhythms of your life. You submitted yourself at your peril to abrupt dietary change, or to the rigorous rule of dietary system. That is the sense of Seneca's maxim "A well-behaved stomach is a great part of liberty": if you have a healthy stomach, then you are not legitimately subject to any rules but those of your own normal patterns of life. Integrity is a circumstance of good digestion. Nor was it just lay public actors who fell in with the Rule of Celsus. It was such a prize that it was cited approvingly by a number of early modern physicians who elsewhere displayed their predilection for the sovereignty of expert dietary system. In these connections, physicians gave themselves considerable flexibility in specifying when patients were in fact healthy or, appearances tending to deceive, actually ill or at imminent risk of becoming so.⁹¹

More to the point, ethical writers dwelt extensively on why "living physically" was neither proper nor practical for the man who meant to act effectively on a public stage. King James wanted his son and heir to appreciate the link between dietary adaptability and effective rule. The consideration here was wholly political. In a face-to-face society, the showing of legitimate condescension—noblesse oblige—commonly took place at table, and this is where table manners might merge with matters of state. For physiological as well as prudential reasons you had to get used to what eating whatever was served, wherever you had to be. That is why James admonished his son to "eate in a manly,

round, and honest fashion" and to get accustomed to eating "reasonable, rude and common-meates, aswel for making your body strong and durable for travel, as that ye may be the hardliner received by your meane subiects in their houses, when their cheere may suffice you." Dietary flexibility was good for you and it was good politics: "[Y]our dyet [should] bee accommodatte to your affaires, & not your affaires to your diet." When in Rome, eat as the Romans.⁹² An effective prince could not allow dietary squeamishness, or his physicians' orders, to keep him away from where the action was, nor could he afford to offend potential allies and valuable followers by declining to eat, and visibly to relish, what was offered. Then as now, declining a proffered dish or drink might be taken as an act of social disengagement.⁹³

Less exalted moralists fell in with the king's counsel, often citing ancient warrant for dietary flexibility. Peacham celebrated the example of the Emperor Augustus, who "was never curious in his diet, but content with ordinary and common viands. And Cato the Censor, sailing into Spain, drank of no other drink than the rowers or slaves of his own galley."⁹⁴ Locke advised that one not accustom children to regular mealtimes. A body grown used to such strict order would give trouble when public business necessitated the disruption of routine. And in no sphere of active life was such adaptability as important as in military occupations.⁹⁵ Of all gentlemanly roles, that of the soldier required a "body used to hardship," accustomed to whatever "accidents may arrive." The soldier's diet was generally unpredictable and often rough: the stomach on which, Napoleon said, an army marches had therefore to be a robust and compliant organ, tempered by the vicissitudes.⁹⁶

So there were many reasons—the typical early modern mélange of the medical, the moral, and the prudential—why the publicly acting gentleman should not live according to expert, externally imposed, dietary rule. To be a slave to system was not civil; it was not prudent; and it was possibly even unnecessary to legitimate interests in preserving the health required to act effectively in society, and to do so until a ripe old age. The doctor's concerns were not necessarily the patient's concerns, nor should they be. Despite their pretensions, doctors didn't know it all, and they might not even know what was really pertinent to a gentleman's health and his freely chosen way of living. This was very much Montaigne's view, enormously influential in shaping Bacon's opinions on these matters, and more generally, both in French and through John Florio's translation, that of late-sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English gentlemanly society.

Like many other late Renaissance and early modern gentlemen, Montaigne

preferred his own experience of his body, and its responses to regimen, to physicians' expert advice and artificial systems. The intellectual basis of being able to act as "your own physician" was adequate self-knowledge. No one could know one's body and its responses to food, drink, and patterns of living as well as oneself, but the price of such knowledge was painstaking attention. A prudent man should acquire and value such dietetic self-knowledge, and Montaigne accounted himself such a man: "I study myself more than any other subject. That is my metaphysics, that is my physics."⁹⁷ The essay "Of Experience" was composed when Montaigne was fifty-six years old—well past the age at which (as the old saying had it) a man should no longer need a physician.⁹⁸ Montaigne here deliberated upon what he had learned, how it bore upon his own proper regimen, and how he then stood in relation to external medical expertise.

"Of Experience" was an eloquent expression of Montaigne's well-known skepticism about external expertise and a vigorous defense of the moral and practical integrity that such skepticism assisted. In form, it is an essay about the general superiority of prudence to systemic pretension; in substantial content, it is in fact a dietary tract about the management of the Galenic nonnaturals. If you were a prudent person, then over the years your dietary routine had been informed by the patterns of your body's responses to food and drink, and, in turn, your body had grown accustomed to that dietary routine: "I believe nothing with more certainty than this: that I cannot be hurt by the use of things that I have been long accustomed to." Your appetite was a pretty reliable guide to what was good for you. If you liked it, it probably liked you. "I have never," Montaigne said, "received harm from any action that was really pleasant to me . . . Both in health and in sickness I have readily let myself follow my urgent appetites. I give great authority to my desires and inclinations. I do not like to cure trouble by trouble . . . My appetite in many things has of its own accord suited and adapted itself rather happily to the health of my stomach . . . It is for habit to give form to our life, just as it pleases; it is all-powerful in that; it is Circe's drink, which varies our nature as it sees fit." Even if your physicians urgently advised it, radical alteration in long-established customs could be bad for you: "Change of any sort is disturbing and hurtful." Montaigne was no fool: when his body began speaking to him in unaccustomed ways, he listened. When sharp sauces started to disagree with him, he went off them and his taste followed suit; when ill, wine lost its savor and he gave it up. But in ordinary circumstances, habit, having become a second nature, was to be respected, and

Montaigne thought that you should be careful about making abrupt changes in dietary routine unless they were absolutely necessary. Still, soldier and public actor that he once had been, Montaigne did not portray himself as a slave to habit: "I have no habit that has not varied according to circumstances"; "The best of my bodily qualities is that I am flexible"; "I was trained for freedom and adaptability." Vicissitudes of life were one thing; the sudden changes that flowed from adopting your doctor's expert systems were quite another.⁹⁹

Montaigne saw no reason not to consult with physicians when he was genuinely ill, even if he suspected that, in general, they knew little and could do less: "The arts that promise to keep our body and our soul in health promise us much; but at the same time there are none that keep their promise less."¹⁰⁰ Expert physicians disagreed among themselves, and, so, if you didn't like the dietary advice that one offered, you could always pitch one doctor's favored rules against another's: "If your doctor does not think it good for you to sleep, to drink wine, or to eat such-and-such a food, don't worry: I'll find you another who will not agree with him." For that reason alone, you might as well do what you thought best, or nothing at all. The curative power of nature was, in any case, probably more effective than the art of any doctor: "We should give free passage to diseases; and I find that they do not stay so long with me, who let them go ahead; and some of those that are considered most stubborn and tenacious, I have shaken off by their own decadence, without help and without art, and against the rules of medicine. Let us give Nature a chance; she knows her business better than we do."¹⁰¹

If you put the conduct of your life under the care of physicians, Montaigne too thought they would make you miserable. Forbidding this and forbidding that, the doctors unman you and, ultimately, undo you: "If they do no other good, they do at least this, that they prepare their patients early for death, undermining little by little and cutting off their enjoyment of life."¹⁰² It was a widely shared general ethical principle that a man who was a slave to system was less than a man. He who was ruled by others, or by a book of rules, was no free actor; he lacked the integrity central to gentlemanly identity.¹⁰³ Montaigne's essay took that general moral case and made it specific to dietetics. Change was physiologically and morally good, better and more possible for youth than age: "A young man should violate his own rules to arouse his vigor and keep it from growing moldy and lax. [There] is no way of life so stupid and feeble as that which is conducted by rules and discipline." "The most unsuitable quality for a gentleman," Montaigne declared, "is overfastidiousness and

bondage to certain particular ways." Not to do, not to eat, or not to drink what was going wherever you were was "shameful": "Let such men stick to their kitchens. In anyone else it is unbecoming, but in a military man it is bad and intolerable; he . . . should get used to every change and vicissitude of life." By all means, listen to those who may have authentic medical expertise, but do not give up your freedom of action in so doing. Montaigne said that he knew of, and pitied, "several gentlemen who, by the stupidity of their doctors, have made prisoners of themselves, though still young and sound in health . . . We should conform to the best rules, but not enslave ourselves to them."¹⁰⁴

One established role for philosophical knowledge in relation to medicine was its ability to guide the physician in preventing and curing disease. Skeptical of the ability of current knowledge to achieve these ends, Montaigne embraced another long-established role for philosophy: it could and should reconcile us to the inevitable circumstances of our mortal condition. To live like a man, one must learn to suffer like a man, and, finally, to die like a man: "We must meekly suffer the laws of our condition. We are born to grow old, to grow weak, to be sick, in spite of all medicine . . . We must learn to endure what we cannot avoid." And when it is time to die, one should die philosophically and well rather than live on stupidly and miserably: "Is it so great a thing to be alive?"¹⁰⁵

The physicians didn't like such talk; they rarely do. Traditional medical dietetics did indeed stress the importance of self-knowledge and the dietetic practice that depended upon this self-knowledge. But physicians also insisted upon the necessity of being consulted in disease, upon the acknowledgment of their expertise in pronouncing whether patients really were well or ill, and upon their role in supervising and guiding patients' self-knowledge. So, for example, Montaigne's contemporary Joubert countered the apparently fashionable idea that there were other legitimate gentlemanly values than looking after one's health, or that submission to expert medical systems was anything but right and wise. It was, the physician wrote, very prudent to live young as if you were old, for then you really would attain vigorous old age. Or, as the proverb had it, "young old, old young." And if princes and public actors objected that they were busy and that it was better for them "to be loose and not observe any rules, schedules, or system," then Joubert settled for the best that he could get, and more than they were usually accustomed to giving. Such people should nevertheless observe "the strictest codes and rules [they] can possibly manage to apply, as much as . . . circumstances will allow."¹⁰⁶ The Jesuit Leonard Lessius also knew his target when he wrote of the reluctance of

civic actors to take the best medical advice: "[T]he Wills and Humours of Men (we know) are stubborn and uncontrollable, and their Appetites too ungovernable to admit of any violent Restraints. Men (we see) will, at least the generality of them, eat and drink, and live according to the ordinary Course of the World, and indulge their sensual Appetites in everything to the full. Thus comes it to pass, that all their other Care and Diligence concerning these Physical maxims, or Prescripts, in the End produce little or no benefit at all." They are fools to live like this and they show their foolishness in blaming physicians for what they have brought upon themselves, "leav[ing] all entirely to Nature, and Event. To live physically they hold (according to the old Proverb) is to live miserably; and they look upon it as a very great Unhappiness for a Man to be dieted, to be denied the free Use (perhaps) of an insatiable Appetite, or Desire."¹⁰⁷

In the eighteenth century even the great dietary doctor George Cheyne recognized the strength of gentlemanly moral resistance to medical rule: "The Reflection is not more common than just, That he who lives *physically* must live miserably. The Truth is, too great Nicety and Exactness about every minute Circumstance that may impair our Health, is such a Yoke and Slavery, as no Man of a generous free Spirit would submit to. 'Tis, as a *Poet* expresses it, *to die for fear of Dying*." Yet Cheyne made his considerable living by peddling dietary advice to those well-heeled gentlemen he judged were, if not actually ill, then in imminent danger of becoming so. And therefore he tempered his appreciation of polite moral resistance by appealing to another set of ethical sensibilities also acknowledged in gentlemanly society: "But then, on the other Hand, to cut off our Days by *Intemperance*, *Indiscretion*, and guilty *Passions*, to live miserably for the sake of gratifying a *sweet Tooth*, or a brutal *Itch*; to die *Martyrs* to our *Luxury* and *Wantonness*, is equally beneath the Dignity of *human Nature*, and contrary to the *Homage* we owe to the *Author* of our Being. Without some Degree of *Health*, we can neither be agreeable to *ourselves*, nor useful to our *Friends*."¹⁰⁸ Intemperance was at once religiously sinful, socially uncivil, and personally imprudent.

Expertise, Integrity, and Common Sense: Early and Late Modern Dietetics

If you were a poor person in the early modern period, you would act as your own physician largely because you could not afford the services of a medical expert. And if you were radically inclined, or if your material interests were at

stake, you might assert the adequacy or superiority of self-treatment as a way of breaking up the medical profession's corporate power and political privileges. But if you were a free-acting gentleman in this period, neither of these considerations typically had much to do with pervasive assertions of medical self-knowledge or with skepticism towards medical expertise. Rather, you acted very substantially as your own physician because you wanted to, especially in circumstances where self-knowledge was central to medical assessments and where medical advice bore upon the fabric of everyday life and upon the identity and integrity of the self. Dietetic self-knowledge and self-care were marks of mundane prudence and moral integrity.

The management of the Galenic nonnaturals constituted the prescriptive part of early modern medical dietetics, but it also made up a substantial part of the early modern cultural practices that established personal identity and social worth. This is just a way of rephrasing the observation that medical dietetics inhabited the same cultural terrain as practical morality. And yet that cohabitation could and did give rise to conflict as well as to consensus—conflict between medical expertise and gentlemanly common sense and conflict between the goals of physicians and those of public actors. Insofar as gentlemen were not professionally qualified, they were, like the "vulgar," laypeople with respect to physicians. But their knowledge was not so easy to condemn as that of the vulgar, nor was it so easy medically to objectify them and their "conditions," nor, again, to dispute their definitions of the situations in which medical counsel might or might not have pertinence or potency.¹⁰⁹ Early modern gentlemen, that is to say, were laypeople of a very special sort. They had a voice, arguably more audible in literate culture than that of the physicians whom they occasionally employed. Gentlemanly prudence could not be dismissed as *mere* common sense or as meretricious "low" knowledge; gentlemanly self-knowledge was hard to gainsay; and gentlemanly goals formed a framework for evaluating physicians' advice whose legitimacy could be challenged only with great difficulty. When early modern gentlemen concurred with what physicians counseled, their assent was consequential, and when they did not, their dissent caused potentially serious problems for the credibility and the social grip of medical expertise.

What has become of that early modern dietetic common domain? One could argue that it dissolved long ago. To a considerable extent, the cultures of moral discourse and of medical expertise have gone their separate ways, though it would be very wrong to describe the divorce as absolute.¹¹⁰ The adage

"You are what you eat" survives as a vestige of a largely lost dietetic culture, while the modern biochemistry of food metabolism gives the formula a renewed charge of credibility at the cost of a fundamental change in meaning. So far as the medical profession is concerned, dietetics no longer exists as a discrete subject in the curriculum. The "dietician" is widely understood to be someone arranging institutional meals for maximum nutritional content at minimum cost; the "nutrition scientist" may study metabolic pathways at many removes from the offer of practical counsel; and the heaps of dietary advice that polysaturate the common culture tend overwhelmingly to pick out the virtues or vices of specific food items in relation to specific conditions or diseases. None of these bears anything but a lexical relationship to the early modern culture of dietetics. The counsel of dietary moderation may be hard to discern in the contemporary culture of medical expertise and in what the laity seems to expect of that expertise. Quackery—defined as identifying simple explanations and remedies for complex conditions—is in the ascendant, and one could plausibly describe present-day lay attitudes to diet, disease, and health as an incoherent assemblage of discrete quackeries. The medical profession has almost wholly given up the role of counseling individuals on their way of life, save with respect to disease-specific conjunctures (for example, exercise and a low-fat diet in relation to coronary artery disease; stress reduction in connection with hypertension). Conversely, patients can rarely effectively insist that the advice of medical experts should be weighed against the range of their own life goals. The dietetic voice of moderation, insofar as it is audible at all in late modern culture, tends to come from sources other than medical experts.

Early modern gentlemanly acknowledgment that the dietetic counsel of moderation might itself have to be qualified by the demands of civility has similarly lost much of its force. If the character of the gentleman no longer exists, nevertheless the scenes of public life and social interaction that gave rise to Montaigne's and Bacon's commendation of dietary decorum still do. Yet some years ago, I gave a dinner party for eight that required—on medical and on ideological grounds—the preparation of four different menus. As to drink, two people would take no red wine, two others would take no wine at all, and one would not drink German wine. Both health and politics effectively trumped civility.

Scaled up, stripped down, and generalized, these observations about the career of dietetics are just familiar truisms about contemporary culture. They bear a family resemblance to academic cultural-theoretical truisms about modernity that plausibly talk about cultural specialization and differentiation,

about the dominance of expertise, about secularization, about the hollowing out and debasement of a once common culture, and about the decline of civility. But, like many truisms about the nature of the modern condition, they tend to mistake the part for the whole, an aspect of how our society is changing for an adequate description of what it is. Indeed, dietetics—interestingly poised at the intersection of self and nonself, of the scientifically descriptive and the morally prescriptive—offers a perspicuous site for reconsidering how one might go about describing the modern condition.

It is worth just pointing out the conditions in which, and the extent to which, early modern dietetic culture remains intact as we enter the twenty-first century. Much of our personal identity and social worth is still asserted, established, and contested through the personal management of the Galenic non-naturals and through others' observations of how we manage them. To that extent, it might be said that medicine and morality continue their cohabitation. Gluttony, drunkenness, sloth, promiscuity, and repeated outbursts of road rage are still likely to be black marks in assessments of individual character; and, although the counsel severely lacks trendiness, adherence to the Golden Mean probably remains a prudent course of action, even now, for anyone wishing to win friends, to influence people, and, for that matter, to decide what and how to eat and drink. Even after hard reflection, and with due deference to the physicians, the psychotherapists, the social workers, and the personal trainers, it is difficult to know what better advice one could possibly give. Of course, we no longer *know* that these practices have a coherent medical identity, and therefore, for us, they do *not* have a medical identity. Those of us who have passed through physiology courses in school or university are unlikely to credit the humoral framework that linked the emotions to diet and that offered a conceptual framework explaining why moderation is good for you.

So dietetic culture, one might say, does survive in late modernity, but as a dispersed set of fragments, ripped free from its original moorings in a medical understanding of the self and without any substantial anchorage in contemporary medical expertise. Like many other allegedly "premodern" modes, the dietetic culture that once bound medicine and morality is possibly better described as submerged in the layered streams of late modern life rather than as dissolved in a unitary, and universally credible, medical expertise. We late moderns resemble Montaigne in many things, not least in our ability to pick and choose which, if any, among the many dissenting voices of medical expertise we will listen to and act upon. Expertise without credibility is nothing at all.

And, while the counsel of dietary moderation is indeed hard to hear in modern culture, it is far from impossible to hear it, and, on hearing it, to be reminded of its sheer common sense and unassailable authority. As I finish this chapter, the current issue of the *New Yorker* brings me Julia Child's irresistible, and only slightly modernized, expression of the ancient Rule of Celsus: "A low-fat diet . . . What does that mean? I think it's unhealthy to eliminate things from your diet. Who knows what they have in them that you might need? Of course, I'm addressing myself to normal, healthy people . . . What I'm trying to do is encourage people to embrace moderation—small helpings, no seconds, no snacking, a little bit of everything, and above all, have a good time."¹¹¹

NOTES

1. Some examples from the Tudor to the early Hanoverian period include Thomas Elyot, *The Castel of Helthe* (1539); John Goeurot, *The Regiment of Life* (1546); Andrew Boorde, *Compendious Regyment or a Dyetary of Healthe* (1547); Luigi Cornaro, *The Temperate Life* (1558–66; common in English translations of the Italian original); Thomas Cogan, *The Haven of Health* (1589); Leonard Lessius, *Hygiasticon* (ca. 1600; again in translation); William Vaughan, *Naturall and Artificial Directions for Health* (1602); Sir John Harington's verse translation of the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum* (as *The Englishmans Doctor*) (1607), and several other prior translations of the same; the anonymous *The Skilful Physician* (1656); Nicholas Culpeper, *A Physicall Directory* (1649); John Archer, *Every Man His Own Doctor* (1671); Thomas Tryon, *The Way of Health, Long Life and Happiness* (1683); George Cheyne, *An Essay of Health and Long Life* (1724). Studies of the early modern English popular medical literature notably include Paul Slack, "Mirrors of Health and Treasures of Poor Men: The Use of the Vernacular Medical Literature of Tudor England," in *Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Charles Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 237–73; Andrew Wear, "The Popularization of Medicine in Early Modern England," in *The Popularization of Medicine, 1650–1850*, ed. Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1992), 17–41; John Henry, "Doctors and Healers: Popular Culture and the Medical Profession," in *Science, Culture, and Popular Belief in Renaissance Europe*, ed. Stephen Pumfrey, Paolo L. Rossi, and Maurice Slawinski (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 191–221, esp. 198–201; Henry E. Sigerist, "The Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum and Some of Its Commentators," in *Landmarks in the History of Hygiene* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 20–35; Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine, and Reform, 1626–1660* (London: Duckworth, 1975), chap. 4 (for the ideological and political context of popular medical writing); and, for a fine recent survey of British and Continental dietetics, Heikki Mikkeli, *Hygiene in the Early Modern Medical Tradition*, Annals of the Finnish Academy of Sciences and Letters, Humaniora, no. 305 (Saarijärvi, Finland: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1999). Unavailable to me at the time of writing this chapter was Ken Albala,

Eating Right in the Renaissance (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), a study of European dietetic books from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries.

2. For studies of the courtesy and related genres, see Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); John E. Mason, *Gentlefolk in the Making: Studies in the History of Courtesy Literature and Related Topics from 1531 to 1774* (1935; reprint, New York: Octagon Books, 1971); George C. Brauer Jr., *The Education of a Gentleman: Theories of Gentlemanly Education in England, 1660–1775* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1959); W. L. Ustick, "Advice to a Son: A Type of Seventeenth Century Conduct Book," *Studies in Philology* 29 (1932): 409–41; idem, "Changing Ideals of Aristocratic Character and Conduct in Seventeenth-Century England," *Modern Philology* 30 (1933): 147–66; Fenela Ann Childs, "Prescriptions for Manners in English Courtesy Literature, 1690–1760, and Their Social Implications" (D. Phil. diss., Oxford University, 1984); Gertrude Elizabeth Noyes, *Bibliography of Courtesy and Conduct Books in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, 1937); and Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the "Courtier": The European Reception of Castiglione's "Cortegiano"* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1995).

3. For example, J. T. Cliffe, *The World of the Country House in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 166–67.

4. Of Francis Osborne's *Advice to His Son*, Pepys said, "I shall not never admire it enough for sense and language." *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert C. Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols. (London: HarperCollins, 1995), 4:96 (5 April 1663); see also 2:199 (19 October 1661), 5:10 (9 January 1663/64), and 5:27 (27 January 1663/64). The decidedly ungenteel experimentalist Robert Hooke possessed four or five courtesy books, though they did not notably affect either his deportment or his diet: Leona Rostenberg, *The Library of Robert Hooke: The Scientific Book Trade of Restoration England* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Modoc Press, 1989), 198, 205–6; Steven Shapin, "Who Was Robert Hooke?" in *Robert Hooke: New Studies*, ed. Michael Hunter and Simon Schaffer (Woodbridge, England: Boydell Press, 1989), 253–85, quotation on 276.

5. Aubrey's selection included works by Peacham, Osborne, Raleigh, de Courtin, Shaftesbury, Montaigne, and Bacon: *Aubrey on Education: A Hitherto Unpublished Manuscript by the Author of "Brief Lives"*, ed. J. E. Stephens (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972; comp. from 1669 to ca. 1694), 131–32.

6. Ludwig Edelstein, "The Dietetics of Antiquity," in idem, *Ancient Medicine: Selected Papers of Ludwig Edelstein*, ed. Owsei Temkin and C. Lilian Temkin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967; article originally published 1931), 303–16, quotation on 303.

7. Galen, *De sanitate tuenda*, quoted in Owsei Temkin, *Galenism: Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1973), 39–40.

8. Owsei Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 15, 45–47. See also Sigerist, "Galen's Hygiene," in *Landmarks in the History of Hygiene*, 1–19, esp. 12.

9. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, 3 vols. (New York: Vintage Books, 1988–90), 2:97–139; see also 3:140–41. (In these connections, Foucault did not cite Edelstein et al., nor, in the approved French academic manner, did he acknowledge the work of any other living or recently deceased scholar. But it is hard to

imagine that, as his references imply, Foucault relied solely on ancient primary sources for his knowledge of dietetics.) For present-day classicists' and moral philosophers' reflections on ethics and body management in antiquity, see also Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); John Cottingham, *Philosophy and the Good Life: Reason and the Passions in Greek, Cartesian, and Psychoanalytic Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); and especially James Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (London: HarperCollins, 1997).

10. Keith Thomas, "Health and Morality in Early Modern England," in *Morality and Health*, ed. Allan M. Brandt and Paul Rozin (New York: Routledge, 1997), 15–34, quotation on 20. See also idem, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500–1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983), 289–300 (esp. for vegetarian dietetics and ethics); and Slack, "Mirrors of Health." Unavailable to me at the time of writing this chapter was Pelling's fine essay "Food, Status, and Knowledge: Attitudes to Diet in Early Modern England," in *The Common Lot: Sickness, Medical Occupations, and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England*, ed. Margaret Pelling (London: Longman, 1998), 38–62.

11. For example, William Coleman, "Health and Hygiene in the *Encyclopédie*: A Medical Doctrine for the Bourgeoisie," *Journal of the History of Medicine* 29 (1974): 399–421; idem, "The People's Health: Medical Themes in 18th-Century French Popular Literature," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 51 (1977): 55–74; Christopher J. Lawrence, "William Buchan: Medicine Laid Open," *Medical History* 19 (1975): 20–36; Charles E. Rosenberg, "Medical Text and Social Context: Explaining William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 57 (1983): 22–42; idem, "The Therapeutic Revolution: Medicine, Meaning, and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century America," *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 20 (1977): 485–506; idem, "Florence Nightingale on Contagion: The Hospital as Moral Universe," in *Healing and History: Essays for George Rosen* (New York: Science History Publications, 1982), 116–36; Ginnie Smith, "Prescribing the Rules of Health: Self-Help and Advice in the Late Eighteenth Century," in *Patients and Practitioners: Lay Perceptions of Medicine in Pre-Industrial Society*, ed. Roy Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 249–82.

12. Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named The Governor*, ed. S. E. Lehmberg (1531; reprint, London: Dent, 1962), 214.

13. [Thomas Gainsford], *The Rich Cabinet furnished with varieties of Excellent Descriptions, Exquisite Characters, Witty Discourses, and Delightfull Histories, Devine and Morall . . . Whereunto is Annexed the Epitome of Good Manners, extracted from Mr. John de la Casa . . .* (1616; reprint, Amsterdam: Da Capo Press for Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1972), 143v.

14. James VI, King of Scotland, later James I of England, *Basilicon Doron*, facsimile ed. (1599; reprint, Menston, England: Scholar Press, 1969), 126.

15. James Cleland, *The Instruction of a Young Noble-man* (Oxford, 1612), 211. Large sections of Cleland's tract are just (unacknowledged) quotations or close paraphrases of the king's *Basilicon Doron*.

16. Henry Peacham, *The Complete Gentleman*, ed. Virgil B. Heltzel (1622, 1634; reprint, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, for the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1962), 151–52.

17. Gilbert Burnet, *Thoughts on Education*, ed. John Clarke (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1914; posthumously published 1761; comp. ca. 1668), 13. Burnet concurred with common early modern hereditary sentiment in urging that care be taken in selecting children's wet nurses for their dietary temperance and good moral character (14–15).

18. Clement Ellis, *The Gentile Sinner, or England's Brave Gentleman Character'd in a Letter to a Friend: Both As He Is, and As He Should Be*, 4th ed. (1660; reprint, Oxford: 1668), 193.

19. Jean Gailhard, *The Compleat Gentleman: Or Directions for the Education of Youth*, 2 pts., separately paginated (London, 1678), pt. 1, 88.

20. John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, ed. R. H. Quick (1693; reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899), 9–12.

21. Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3d earl of Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, in Two Discourses . . .* (London, 1699), 162–73. See also Henry Richard Fox Bourne, *The Life of John Locke*, 2 vols. (1876; reprint, Darmstadt, Germany: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1969), 2:255–64.

22. Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 121; Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 555–62; Roy Porter and G. S. Rousseau, *Gout: The Patrician Malady* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), esp. 48–59. See also Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1982), 3–35, 233–35; Andrew B. Appleby, "Diet in Sixteenth-Century England: Sources, Problems, Possibilities," in *Health, Medicine, and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. Webster, 97–116; and Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society, and Family Life in London, 1660–1730* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 272–81. Earle estimates that even those Londoners in "the middle station" of society consumed meat four or five days a week, and the modern Californian runs the risk of furred arteries by just reading the carnivorous bill of fare for gentlemanly feasts.

23. Peacham, *Complete Gentleman*, 153, 235–36, 238–39.

24. Richard Lingard, *A Letter of Advice to a Young Gentleman Leaving the University Concerning His Behaviour and Conversation in the World*, ed. Frank C. Erb (1670; reprint, New York: MacAuliffe & Booth, 1907), 41. See also Thomas, "Health and Morality," 21, and Burke, *Fortunes of the "Courtier"*, 113–15.

25. In the 1540s Sir Thomas Elyot celebrated the nutritional virtues of English roast beef, while recognizing the possible dangers of excess: "Biefe of Englande to Englysshe-men, whiche are in helth, bringeth stronge nouryshynge, but it maketh grosse bloude, and ingendreth melancoly." *The Castel of Helthe* (London, 1541), 16r.

26. Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 34–35.

27. James Boswell, "The Life of Samuel Johnson," in *The Portable Johnson & Boswell*, ed. Louis Kronenberger (New York: Viking, 1947), 122–23.

28. On this, see the learned and entertaining Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*.

29. Desiderius Erasmus, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, trans. Lester K. Born (1516; reprint, New York: Octagon, 1965), 209.

30. Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Charles S. Singleton (1528; reprint, Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1959), 135.

31. Stefano Guazzo, *The Civile Conversation of M. Steven Guazzo*, trans. George Pettie and Barth[olomew] Young, ed. Sir Edward Sullivan, 2 vols. (1574 [Italian], 1581, 1586 [English]; reprint, London: Constable and Co., 1925), 2:137.

32. François, duc de La Rochefoucauld, *The Maxims of La Rochefoucauld*, trans. Louis Kronenberger (1665; reprint, New York: Random House, 1959), 142.
33. See, among very many such ancient arguments for dietary moderation influential in early modern England, Plutarch, "Rules for the Preservation of Health," in *Plutarch's Lives and Miscellanies*, ed. A. H. Clough and William W. Goodwin, 5 vols. (New York: Colonial Company, 1905), 1:251-79; and "Plutarch's Symposiacs," in *ibid.*, 3:197-460, esp. 290-95, 339, 394-98. Of course, the average educated Englishman—even equipped with decent school Latin—was more likely to encounter both the ethical and the medical knowledge of antiquity via early modern English summaries and compendia.
34. On the body as divine temple in English Protestant thought, see, for instance, Keith Thomas, "Cleanliness and Godliness in Early Modern England," in *Religion, Culture, and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 56-83, esp. 62-63; *idem*, "Health and Morality," 16-18.
35. Giovanni Della Casa, *Galateo*, trans. Konrad Eisenbichler and Kenneth R. Bartlett (1558, widely available in English translation from 1576; reprint, Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1986), 9-10, 57-59; Antoine de Courtin, *The Rules of Civility; or, Certain Ways of Deportment observed amongst all Persons of Quality upon Several Occasions, newly revised and much enlarged* (1671; reprint, London: 1685), 122-45; Peacham, *Complete Gentleman*, 153; Ellis, *Gentile Sinner*, 189; Gailhard, *Compleat Gentleman*, pt. 1, 90; Josiah Dare, *Counsellor Manners: His Last Legacy to His Son* (1672; reprint, New York: Coward-McCann, 1929), 16-18; John Evelyn, *A Character of England*, in *Harleian Miscellany*, ed. T. Park (London, 1808-13), 10:189-98; Cleland, *Instruction of a Young Noble-man*, 211-12; Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 83, 93, 121; *idem*, "The Rhetoric of Status: Gesture, Demeanour, and the Image of the Gentleman in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England," in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, ed. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), 136-53, on 145, 150-51.
36. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, 2 vols. [vol. 1 = *The History of Manners*; vol. 2 = *The Court Society*] (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978, 1983), esp. vol. 1, chap. 2, pt. 4 ("On Behavior at Table"). See also Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985); *idem*, "On the Civilizing of Appetite," in *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth, and Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage, 1991), 126-56; Janet Whatley, "Food and the Limits of Civility," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15 (1984): 387-400; cf. the historical criticisms of Elias in Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 105. Cultural anthropologists, of course, have made a meal of food, and food-giving, symbolism; see, among very many examples, Mary Douglas and Jonathan L. Gross, "Food and Culture: Measuring the Intricacy of Rule Systems," *Social Science Information* 20 (1981): 1-35; Jack R. Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (1964; reprint, New York: Harper & Row, 1969); *idem*, *From Honey to Ashes*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (1966; reprint, New York: Harper & Row, 1973); *idem*, *The Origin of Table Manners*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (1968; reprint, New York: Harper & Row, 1978). So, too, have cultural historians, for instance, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

- 1987); Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989); Piero Camporesi, *Bread of Dreams: Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Europe*, trans. David Gentilcore (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).
37. King James, *Basilicon Doron*, 124.
38. Gailhard, *Compleat Gentleman*, pt. 2, 67-68. See also Cleland, *Instruction of a Young Noble-man*, 210; Della Casa, *Galateo*, 57; de Courtin, *Rules of Civility*, 131-33; Thomas, "Health and Morality," 27.
39. King James, *Basilicon Doron*, 124, 126. Here, as elsewhere, Cleland closely followed royal advice: *Instruction of a Young Noble-man*, 207-13. See also Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, 209, and Sir John Harington's popular verse translation of the Salernitan canon: "A King that cannot rule him in his dyet, / Will hardly rule his Realme in peace and quiet." *The School of Salernum: Regimen Sanitatis Salerni* (1607; reprint, Salerno: Ente Provinciale per il Turismo, 1957), 50. (Harington was a favorite of Henry, Prince of Wales, and Cleland dedicated his *Instruction* to Harington.)
40. Laurent Joubert, *The Second Part of the Popular Errors*, trans. Gregory David de Rocher (1579; reprint, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995), 256-57. I here quote a physician on the subject of princely obligations because Joubert's account is particularly clear and extended, but his counsel is pervasively, if more diffusely, echoed in the practical ethical literature.
41. [William Cecil, Baron Burghley], *The Counsell of a Father to His Sonne, in Ten Severall Precepts, Left as a Legacy at His Death* (London, 1611), broadsheet; Dare, *Counsellor Manners*, 60-61.
42. Gainsford, *Rich Cabinet*, 36v.
43. Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, 83-85; Brauer, *Education of a Gentleman*, 25-27; Thomas, "Health and Morality," 27; de Courtin, *Rules of Civility*, 123.
44. Peter Charron, *Of Wisdome*, trans. Sansom Lennard (London, 1612), 540; Burghley, *Counsell of a Father*.
45. Gainsford, *Rich Cabinet*, 51r.
46. Castiglione, *Courtier*, 299, 302.
47. Elyot, *Governor*, 209.
48. Ellis, *Gentile Sinner*, 131. See also the similarly Puritanical Richard Bra[il]thwait, *The English Gentleman. Containing Sundry Excellent Rules or Exquisite Observations, tending to Direction of Every Gentleman, of Selecter Ranke and Qualitie* (London, 1630), 305-72, esp. 306, 310.
49. Walter Raleigh, "Sir Walter Raleigh's Instructions to His Son and to Posterity," in *The Works of Sir Walter Raleigh, Kt.*, 8 vols. (London, 1876), 8:557-70, quotation on 568. Raleigh was here quoting Anacharsis, reputed to be one of the Seven Sages of Antiquity.
50. Lingard, *Letter of Advice*, 16-17.
51. William de Britaine, *Humane Prudence, or the Art by which a Man May Raise Himself & Fortune to Grandeur*, 3d ed. (London, 1686), 31.
52. Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 25.
53. Castiglione, *Courtier*, 302.
54. Elyot, *Governor*, 209.
55. Lodowick Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life*, ed. Thomas E. Wright (1606; reprint, Northridge, Calif.: San Fernando Valley State College, 1970), 48, 162. This was apparently a popular early modern interpretation of Plato's *Republic*, IV, 430e-432b.
56. Gainsford, *Rich Cabinet*, 144r; Brathwait, *English Gentleman*, 311.

57. King James, *Basilicon Doron*, 100–101. See also Brathwait, *English Gentleman*, 305, 311. The identification of temperance as master virtue was not, of course, uncontested in the early modern period. For *prudence* “as the generall Queene, superintendent, and guide of all other vertues,” see Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 350. Temperance was, for Charron, “not a speciaall vertue, but generall and common, the seasoning sauce of all the rest” (532). The translator dedicated the book to Henry, Prince of Wales.
58. For the Galenic sources of the doctrine and phrase, see L. J. Rather, “The ‘Six Things Non-Natural’: A Note on the Origins and Fate of a Doctrine and a Phrase,” *Clio Medica* 3 (1968): 337–47; Saul Jarcho, “Galen’s Six Non-Naturals: A Bibliographic Note and Translation,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 44 (1970): 372–77; Peter Niebyl, “The Non-Naturals,” *ibid.* 45 (1971): 486–92; Jerome J. Bylebyl, “Galen on the Non-Natural Causes of Variation in the Pulse,” *ibid.* 45 (1971): 482–85; and Mikkeli, *Hygiene*, chap. 1. For a study of the nonnaturals in French early modern popular medicine, see Antoinette Emch-Dériaz, “The Non-Naturals Made Easy,” in *Popularization of Medicine*, ed. Porter, 134–59, and Coleman, “Health and Hygiene in the *Encyclopédie*.”
59. Henry Peacham, *The Truth of Our Times* (London, 1638), bound together with *idem*, *Complete Gentleman*, 175–239, quotation on 239.
60. Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 9–24. Among other practical ethical tracts organizing their advice—to a greater or lesser extent—through a list of the non-naturals, see King James’s *Basilicon Doron*.
61. For the medical context of Descartes’s views on the passions, see, for example, Steven Shapin, “Descartes the Doctor: Rationalism and Its Therapies,” *British Journal for the History of Science* 33 (2000): 131–54. For an entry into the early modern literature on the passions, see, for example, Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Stephen Gaukroger, ed., *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1998); Cottingham, *Philosophy and the Good Life*, esp. chap. 3; and Jon Elster, *Alchemistries of the Mind: Rationality and the Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
62. George Cheyne, *An Essay of Health and Long Life* (London, 1724), 5. This passage is also quoted by Thomas’s fine “Health and Morality,” 24 (see 20–24 for Thomas’s appreciation of the ethical significance of the nonnaturals).
63. Francis Bacon, “The History of Life and Death, . . .” in *The Philosophical Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath, 5 vols. (London: Longman and Co., 1857–58; essay posthumously published 1636), 5:213–335, quotation on 299; also Steven Shapin, “Proverbial Economies: How an Understanding of Some Linguistic and Social Features of Common Sense Can Throw Light on More Prestigious Bodies of Knowledge, Science for Example,” *Social Studies of Science* 31 (2001): 731–69, esp. 756–57.
64. In a mid-sixteenth-century translation of Erasmus’s *Proverbs*, the Latin tag was given as “Without meate and drinke the lust of the body is colde”; alternatively, “The beste way to tame carnall lust, is to kepe abstinence of meates and drinkes”; and “A licorouse [licentious] mouth a licourouse taile.” Desiderius Erasmus, *Proverbs or Adages*, ed. and trans. Richard Taverner (London, 1569), 34v. For medical proverbs generally, see Archer Taylor, *The Proverb* (1931; reprint, Berlin: Peter Lang, 1985), 121–29.
65. Cleland, *Instruction of a Young Noble-man*, 209. See also Gainsford, *Rich Cabinet*, 134v.

66. Peacham, *Complete Gentleman*, 151. See also Gainsford, *Rich Cabinet*, 36v; Castiglione, *Courtier*, 302. The literature produced by religious ascetics from the early Christian period is especially rich in appreciations of the causal influence of diet on sexual desire, while such ancient secular thinkers as Seneca laid much stress on the diet-anger connection. For an entry to this material, see Steven Shapin, “The Philosopher and the Chicken: On the Dietetics of Disembodied Knowledge,” in *Science Incarnate: Historical Embodiments of Natural Knowledge*, ed. Christopher Lawrence and Steven Shapin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 21–50, and, especially, Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 35–37.
67. Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 540.
68. George Cheyne, *The English Malady: or, a Treatise of Nervous Diseases of All Kinds*, ed. Roy Porter (1733; reprint, London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1991). See also Anita Guerini, *Obesity and Depression in the Enlightenment: The Life and Times of George Cheyne* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), esp. chap. 6; Bryan S. Turner, “The Government of the Body: Medical Regimens and the Rationalization of Diet,” *British Journal of Sociology* 33 (1982): 254–69; *idem*, “The Discourse of Diet,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 1 (1982): 23–32.
69. I have written elsewhere about the practices and significance of philosophical asceticism, and their juxtaposition with early modern civic sensibilities: see Shapin, “Philosopher and the Chicken,” esp. 33–37.
70. Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (1628; reprint, New York: Tudor Publishing, 1927), 200. The seventeenth-century sense of “Cockney” (a hen’s egg, and by analogy a coddled child) did indeed pick out town dwellers in general and Londoners in particular but more directly pointed to people who were effete and squeamish—milkshops. See also Piero Camporesi, *The Anatomy of the Senses: Natural Symbols in Medieval and Early Modern Italy*, trans. Allan Cameron (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 65 (for hunger as “the cheapest and most universal of drugs”), and chap. 4 generally (for the early modern cultural significance of dietary abstinence).
71. Peacham, *Complete Gentleman*, 154. Peacham was here quoting *Ecclesiasticus*, a well-known compilation of maxims from the second century B.C.E.. The full passage is “What is life to a man derived of wine? / Was it not created to warm men’s hearts? / Wine brings gaiety and high spirits, / if a man knows when to drink and when to stop; / but wine in excess makes for bitter feelings / and leads to offence and retaliation.” Jesus Ben Sira, *Ecclesiasticus or The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach*, ed. John G. Snaith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 154.
72. See notably Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (1965; reprint, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984). As Peter Burke nicely pointed out, “It was meat which put the *carne* in Carnival.” Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith, 1978), 186 (and chap. 7, for “The World of Carnival”).
73. Francis Bacon, “The Advancement of Learning [Books I–II],” in *Philosophical Works*, 3:253–491, quotation on 373.
74. Francis Bacon, “Of Regiment of Health,” in *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. Michael Kiernan (1625; reprint, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 100–102, quotation on 101. Bacon’s was a creative reading of what Celsus actually had to say on the matter in *De medicina*, while the editor of this edition of the *Essayes* more circumspectly judges that “the notion of the ‘benigne Extreme’ is Bacon’s emphasis” (237).

75. Bacon, "History of Life and Death," 261–62.
76. William Rawley, "The Life of the Right Honourable Francis Bacon," in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath, 15 vols. (Boston: Brown and Taggard, 1860–64; article comp. 1670), 1:3–18, quotation on 16–17.
77. Quoted in *Works of Francis Bacon*, 14:567.
78. *Ibid.*, 14:261, 277, 295. Like Robert Burton (quoted above), Bacon was here explicitly criticizing the pedantic dietary precision of Luigi Cornaro's influential *De vita sobria* (Venice, 1558).
79. Bacon, "History of Life and Death," 304. This respecification of dietary moderation is briefly noted in Shapin, "Philosopher and the Chicken," 35–36. This is as far as Celsus went on the matter: "It is well . . . to attend at times a banquet, at times to hold aloof; to eat more than sufficient at one time, at another no more; to take food twice rather than once a day, and always as much as one wants provided one digests it." Aulus Cornelius Celsus, *De medicina*, trans. W. G. Spencer, 3 vols. (London: Heinemann; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 1:43. But slightly later Celsus wrote, "Coming to food, a surfeit is never of service, [and] excessive abstinence is often unserviceable" (49).
80. Rawley, "Life of Bacon," 17 (for "grosser humours"); Bacon to Sir Humphrey May (May [1623]): "You may perhaps think me partial to Potycaries, that have been ever puding in physic all my life." *Works of Francis Bacon*, 14:515. See also Lisa Jardine, *Ingenious Pursuits: Building the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, Nan A. Talese, 1999), 294–95. For details of Bacon's self-medication, and also what he took from apothecaries, see "The Letters and the Life, Vol. IV," in *Works of Francis Bacon*, 11:28–29, 53–54, 78–80 (the *Memoriae valetudinis*, recording Bacon's struggles with stone, gout, and melancholy); 13:200, 209, 328, 335; 14:10, 335, 398–99, 431, 514–15, 566–67 (his recipe for the rhubarb purgative and how he used it). On the mend from an illness, Bacon wrote to Buckingham (29 August 1623), "I thank God, I am prettily recovered; for I have lain at two wards, the one against my disease, the other against my physicians, who are strange creatures." *Works of Francis Bacon*, 14:431.
81. Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, "Of Experience," in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (1580, 1588; reprint, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1965), 815–57, quotation on 830.
82. Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica: Or, Enquiries into Very Many Received Tenents, And Commonly Presumed Truths* (London, 1650), 229.
83. Laurent Joubert, *Popular Errors*, trans. Gregory David de Rocher (1579; reprint, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989), 247; *idem*, *Second Part of Popular Errors*, 263.
84. John Aubrey, "Thomas Hobbes," in *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1975), 147–59, quotation on 155.
85. James Mackenzie, *The History of Health, and the Art of Preserving It*, 3d ed. (1758; reprint, Edinburgh: 1760), 125–26. Later on (135n.), Mackenzie made it clear that he was specifically criticizing Bacon's commendation of excess and the legitimacy of recruiting Celsus as an approving authority. See also Cheyne, *Essay of Health and Long Life*, 47–48. Others attributed the medical authority of such dangerous counsel to Avicenna.
86. Bacon, "Of Regiment of Health," 101. A historian of political thought perceptively discerns in this aphorism the "summation" of Bacon's moral philosophy: Ian Box, "Bacon's Moral Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon*, ed. Markku Peltonen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 260–82, on 278.

87. See, especially, Julian Martin, *Francis Bacon, the State, and the Reform of Natural Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); also Stephen Gaukroger, *Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early-Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
88. La Rochefoucauld, *Maxims*, 155.
89. Rawley, "Life of Bacon," 17.
90. Celsus, *De medicina*, 1:43. See also Mark Grant, *Dieting for an Emperor: A Translation of Books 1 and 4 of Orabasius' 'Medical Compilations' with an Introduction and Commentary* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1997), 12.
91. For example, Joubert, *Second Part of Popular Errors*, 263 (the healthy man "while he is feeling well, belongs to himself and does not have to follow any rule or diet nor consult a physician"); John Arbuthnot, *An Essay Concerning the Nature of Aliments, and the Choice of Them, according to the Different Constitutions of Human Bodies*, . . . 4th ed. (1731; reprint, London: J. and R. Tonson, 1756), 178–79 ("[A] healthy Man, under his own Government, ought not to tie himself to strict Rules, nor to abstain from any Sort of Food in common Use"); Mackenzie, *History of Health*, 135 ("A man who is sound and strong should ty himself down to no particular rule of diet, nor imagine that he stands in need of a physician"); Benito Jerónimo Feijóo y Montenegro, *Rules for Preserving Health, particularly with regard to Studious Persons*, trans. anon. from the Spanish (London: [1800?]), 79–80, 85. See also Mikkeli, *Hygiene*, 93–94, 102, 106, 108, 125, 130–31, 141. For the Rule in a popular medical text by a nonprofessional, see Elyot, *Castel of Helthe*, 45r ("[A]s Cornelius Celsus saith, A man that is hole and well at ease, and is at his lybertie, ought not to bynde him selfe to rules, or nede a phisition"); also Leonard Lessius, *Hygiasticon: Or, A Treatise of the Means of Health and Long Life, in A Treatise of Health and Long Life, with the Sure Means of Attaining It, in Two Books. The First by Leonard Lessius, The Second by Lewis Cornaro, a Noble Venetian: Translated into English, by Timothy Smith, Apothecary* (ca. 1600; reprint, London, 1743), 23–24 ("For [generally speaking] any Sort of Food that is common to one suits agreeably enough with hale Constitutions").
92. King James, *Basilicon Doron*, 125, 127; and, following the king, Cleland, *Instruction of a Young Noble-man*, 212: "I thinke it best to accustome your selfe unto the Countrie where you are."
93. De Courtin, *Rules of Civility*, 128–30.
94. Peacham, *Complete Gentleman*, 151. See also Lingard, *Letter of Advice*, 41.
95. Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 11–12.
96. Gaillard, *Compleat Gentleman*, pt. 1, 85–86; Edward Panton, *Speculum Juventutis: or, a True Mirror . . .* (London, 1671), 188.
97. Montaigne, "Of Experience," 821.
98. Descartes's version ran this way: "So, as Tiberius Caesar said (or Cato, I think), no one who has reached the age of thirty should need a doctor, since at that age he is quite able to know himself through experience what is good or bad for him, and so be his own doctor." John Cottingham, ed. and trans., *Descartes' Conversations with Burman* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 51. The source is in fact Suetonius's life of Tiberius.
99. Montaigne, "Of Experience," 827, 830, 832. See also Margaret Brunyate, "Montaigne and Medicine," in *Montaigne and His Age*, ed. Keith Cameron (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1981), 27–38.
100. Montaigne, "Of Experience," 827.
101. *Ibid.*, 833.

102. Ibid., 832.

103. For a summary of the links between free action and gentlemanly identity in early modern English culture, see Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), esp. chaps. 2–3.

104. Montaigne, "Of Experience," 830–31. Compare Charron: "It is one of the vanities & follies of man, to prescribe lawes and rules that exceed the use and capacitie of men, as some Philosophers and Doctors have done. They propose strange and elevated formes or images of life, or at leastwise so difficult and austere, that the practice of them is impossible at least for a long time, yea the attempt is dangerous to manie." Charron, *Of Wisdome*, 197.

105. Montaigne, "Of Experience," 835.

106. Joubert, *Second Part of Popular Errors*, 262.

107. Lessius, *Hygiasticon*, 2–3. Lessius was not himself a physician; he taught philosophy and divinity at the Jesuits' college at Louvain.

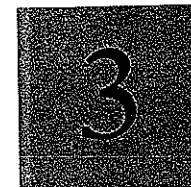
108. Cheyne, *Essay of Health and Long Life*, 4.

109. On these points, see the classic papers by N. D. Jewson, "Medical Knowledge and the Patronage System in Eighteenth-Century England," *Sociology* 8 (1974): 369–85, and "The Disappearance of the Sick-Man from Medical Cosmology, 1770–1870," *ibid.* 10 (1976): 225–44.

110. For example, Charles E. Rosenberg, "Banishing Risk: Continuity and Change in the Moral Management of Disease," in *Morality and Health*, ed. Brandt and Rozin, 35–51.

111. Julia Child, quoted in Calvin Tomkins, "Table Talk," *New Yorker*, 8 November 1999, 32.

MARY E. FISSELL



Making a Masterpiece

The Aristotle Texts in Vernacular Medical Culture

Popular medical books, those small works explicitly intended for patients rather than practitioners, have left few historical traces. Hundreds of different texts from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries survive today, usually in copies that look well worn. We presume that some were publishing successes because they went into many editions. Nicholas Culpeper's *English Physician*, first published in 1652, was republished at least fifty-four times in the next century and a half, and many times thereafter, often under the title *Culpeper's Herbal*. Eighteenth-century bestsellers included William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* (at least fifty-two editions to 1800) and John Wesley's *Primitive Physick* (at least twenty-four editions to 1800).¹ Despite such apparent success, however, these books have left few historical traces, and we have little evidence about how they were used. Those standbys of social history, letters and diaries, do not often mention such works. Nor do probate inventories list many popular medical works because often they were worth too little to mention.

One book, however, provides something of an exception to this historical silence. This is *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, an amalgam of midwifery advice spiced with a few hints about sexual intercourse.² References to *Aristotle's Masterpiece*, first published in 1684, appear in a range of sources. For example, the English radical Francis Place read *Aristotle's Masterpiece* as a schoolboy in the late eighteenth century. As he explained in his autobiography, "This I contrived